J: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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342 573 are simply constructed, the roots of grasses, or occasionally stems of millet, being tightly packed in a narrow trench to make windscreens, and the tops of the grasses being bound together and plastered with dung on the outside to make huts (Plates XV (*a*), XIX (*a*), and XXI (*b*)). The whole space within a windscreen is occupied by a hearth of ashes on which the men sleep around a fire, and the openings face the kraal. If people do not intend to spend more than a few days at a site they often sleep in the open and do not trouble to erect windscreens and huts. These light dwellings can be erected in a few hours.

IV

221 136 231 Another circumstance that determines Nuer movements is the abundance of insect life, which is an ever-present menace, for the cattle get little rest from stinging flies and ticks from morn till nightfall and would be worried to death if their masters did not give them some protection.

136 231 372 Mosquitoes swarm in the rains, their ravages being terrible from July to September, when, as soon as the sun sets, men and beasts have to take refuge in huts and byres. The doors of the huts are tightly closed, the air-holes blocked, and fires lit. In the centre of the byres, which house the cattle, burn large dung fires which fill them with smoke so dense that one cannot even see the cattle. Young men sleep on platforms above the fires, and if the smoke clears—the doors are shut, but it escapes through the thatched roof—they descend to pile on more fuel. By this means the beasts are enabled to obtain some rest at night. At the end of the rains while the cattle are still in the villages they are left in the kraals till their masters go to bed, when they are shut in the byres to protect them from lions. Fires are not made up so high at this season, for mosquitoes are less troublesome, since there is no surface water, the millet has been cut, and the grasses are close-cropped. Later those men who remain in the villages, while the others go into camps, often erect windscreens in the kraals and spend the night outside with any cows which have been left behind. In the dry season mosquitoes are absent except near pools and marshes, and even in the vicinity of water they are not troublesome from January to May, so that the herds can sleep in the open. Nevertheless,

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they are surrounded by windscreens in which their masters sleep at the side of dung fires from which smoke rises on every side to envelop the camp.

Another unpleasant pest is the seroot fly. It appears to be seasonal, flourishing on cloudy days from May to July, though it sometimes appears at other times of the year. The seroot attack the cattle in the mornings and accompany them to pastures, where they bite them so effectively that they are often driven, stained with blood, back to camp, where dung fires are lit to give them protection. On such days the cattle are unable to graze, fitfully, for more than two or three hours. Another biting fly, the *stomoxys*, is prevalent throughout the year, being especially conspicuous in the dry season and early rains. It is probably this fly which is responsible for the presence of trypanosomiasis in parts of Nuerland, especially among the Eastern Jikany, by transmitting the trypanosomes directly on its proboscis from beast to beast, for the tsetse does not occur in Nuerland, except, perhaps, on its eastern extremities, though its lethal character is well known to Nuer. There are other insects which annoy the cattle, but it is not known whether any of them carry disease in this latitude. Of these may be mentioned the eight-legged cattle tick, which Nuer remove from the bodies of their animals when they return to camp in the evenings—though not frequently or systematically enough; an insect called *tharkwac* which is said to live on the bodies of cattle, though its bites do not cause bleeding; a fly called *miek*; and the common black fly, like our house fly in appearance, which worries the herds a good deal in hot weather—damp and cold seem to kill it off. Red soldier ants occasionally infest the byres so that the cattle have to be removed while the floors are sprinkled with ashes, but they are rare in Nuerland. Nuer are helpless against most of these insects, though, no doubt, smoke keeps them away to some extent.

Speaking from personal experience I may say that one is continuously tormented by insects in Nuerland, especially by the common black fly and the mosquito. It is evident that the cattle suffer considerably from their attentions and there can be little doubt that this constant irritation lowers their vitality and affects their milk yield, for they seldom have any real rest. In the circumstances their hardiness and endurance are remarkable.

Since several species of tsetse in the Southern Sudan carry trypanosomes pathogenic to cattle it is fortunate for the Nuer that they do not occur in his country. This immunity is

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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undoubtedly due to the absence of shady forest which, in its turn, is probably due in the main to flooding and partly to firing. The prevalence of tsetse in the forest belt that stretches along the foot-hills of the Ethiopian escarpment has prevented the Nuer from expanding as far eastwards as they might have done, for it is clear that one of the reasons for their evacuation of Anuakland was the loss of stock. In relation to tsetse the Nuer, in their present territory, occupy a more favourable position than most Southern Sudan peoples.

A further consideration of great importance is the presence of many microscopic organisms that cause disease in men and cattle. This is not a subject about which we can say much. With regard to stock it may, however, be said that it suffers from many different diseases and that Nuer usually have some treatment for them, though it may be doubted whether it has much, if any, therapeutic value. The two most serious contagious diseases are bovine pleuro-pneumonia, which in some years causes heavy mortality among the herds, and rinderpest. Rinderpest entered the Sudan not more than fifty years ago and Nuer refer to the period before it came, along with Arab invaders, at the time the Boiloc age-set was being initiated, as 'the life of the cattle'. They have no way of combating the scourge once it has attacked a herd, but they are aware that an infected herd ought to be isolated. They are so used to it now that they generally take the precaution of splitting up their herd in the dry season, when it is prevalent, and placing beasts in widely separated camps, so that if it breaks out in any part of the country the cattle placed in another part may escape. An animal which recovers from the disease is known to be immune from further attacks and its value is thereby enhanced, though Nuer are aware that its calves will not enjoy the same immunity. Miss Soule tells me that Nuer claim to be able to tell if an animal has had rinderpest by scraping the tip of the horns and noting the colour beneath the surface. If it is white the animal is immune. Though threatened with starvation in the years of its visitation Nuer face the scourge with resignation and detachment.

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Rinderpest has caused and continues to cause terrible havoc in the herds. It cannot exactly be estimated what, and how

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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extensive, have been the social changes which have resulted from this disturbance of the oecological equilibrium. Since bride-wealth consists of cattle there must have been for a time considerable dislocation of marriage arrangements, but stability has been reached to-day by lowering the number of cattle which have to be paid. A like assessment on a new footing does not seem to have been achieved in homicide negotiations, in which there is not the same goodwill between the parties as in marriage, and blood-wealth appears to have been claimed up to the present time at the old rate of payment, though Nuer recognize that bride-wealth and blood-wealth should rise and fall together. One cannot make any precise statement on the matter, but it is likely that feuds were less easily concluded than before and that consequently tribal relations were affected. It may also be supposed that decrease in stock has led to a general deterioration of the standard of living, for climatic conditions do not allow adequate compensation by expending further labour on horticulture. No doubt Nuer grew more millet than before, but they must have suffered a decrease in their total food-supply and, above all, in security. It will be seen in a later section that Nuer can no more exist on a purely horticultural economy than they can, at any rate since the introduction of rinderpest, exist on a purely pastoral economy. They must have a mixed economy and can compensate on one side or the other only to a very limited degree. Nuer sought to repair their losses rather by extensive raiding of their Dinka neighbours, passing on to them their own losses in stock. We know that Nuer raided Dinka before rinderpest entered the country, but it is likely that their foreign relations have been affected by the greater stimulus to aggression. Other probable effects could be noted, especially in kinship relations, but one can only guess their importance, so we confine our speculations to a few of those that may be supposed to have occurred in Nuer economy and political life.

V

It was noted in Chapter I that to exist Nuer have to make use of a mixed economy, since their herds do not supply them with adequate nourishment. It will be seen in a later section that their millet harvest is often meagre and uncertain. Fish,

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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commencement of the rains, in April and May, when the rivers begin to rise again and bring the fish into the shallows where they are easily speared among the reeds and weeds. There is very little fishing—by spear in occasional lagoons—after the Nuer have returned to their villages, for these are mainly inland, away from open water, and the streams are too deep and too infested with crocodiles to encourage fishing. Also, the fish are widely distributed by flood water and protected by rank marsh vegetation. Those Nuer whose villages are on the banks of large rivers sometimes fish from dug-out canoes (Plate IX) with long harpoons, but the Nuer possess very few good canoes —and these they have exchanged or stolen from the Anuak— for they have neither the wood nor the skill to make more than crudely burnt-out vessels of palm and sycamore.

Nuer are fine spearsmen but, otherwise, not very ingenious fishermen. Except for occasional fish spitted with amazing rapidity from the bows of canoes by harpoons and spears as they jump or rise to the surface, Nuer never see their prey, but either hurl their spears at random into likely spots amid weeds and reeds or set up grasses and withies to indicate the presence of fish. A myth recounts that once upon a time all fish were visible to the human eye but that God later made them invisible in the water. The chief Nuer weapon is the barbed spear, though the harpoon is considerably used. When fishing in shallows with spears they sometimes strike the water with a ball of twine or the shell of a giant snail attached to a stick (Fig. 10) to attract the fish. Fish are eaten roasted or boiled.

VI

Nuerland is also very rich in game, though Nuer do not exploit this source of food extensively. There are vast herds of tiang and cob; other antelopes are plentiful; and buffalo, elephant, and hippopotami abound. Nuer eat all animals except carnivora, monkeys, some of the smaller rodents, and zebra, and they kill the last for its skin and tail in the south of Lou country, where it roams in the dry season. Lions abound, especially to the west of the Nile, and are a serious menace to the herds, but Nuer only kill them and leopards, the skins of which are worn by chiefs, if they attack cattle in kraals or grazing grounds, as

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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frequently happens, especially in the early dry season. They seldom go out to hunt game animals, except gazelle and giraffe, and only pursue those that approach their camps. Indeed, they cannot be considered keen hunters and may even be said to treat the sport with a measure of condescension, holding that only absence of cattle makes a man engage in it other than casually. Their flocks and herds provide them with meat, and this fact probably accounts in part for their lack of interest in hunting, which is, however, also to be related to the nature of their country, for its open plains offer little opportunity for successful hunting with the spear.

Nuer refuse all reptiles, except the crocodile and the turtle. Ostriches, bustards, francolin and guinea-fowl, geese, duck, teal, and other waterfowl, abound, but Nuer consider it shameful for adults to eat them and, except in very severe famines it is probable that only children, poor cattleless men, and an occasional elderly person, eat them, and then rarely and secretly in the bush. They do not keep domesticated fowls and show particular repugnance to the idea of eating them. Likewise eggs are not eaten. No insects are eaten, but the honey of wild bees is collected after the firing of the grasses in December and January and is either eaten in the bush or with porridge at home.

The only tribe who possess more than an odd gun or two are the Eastern Gaajak, who obtain them from Ethiopia. Nuer hunt with dogs and the spear, and rely on their fleetness, endurance, and courage. Hunting in the rains is therefore impossible, because not only does rank vegetation impede pursuit but also animals can choose their ground, there being everywhere sufficient water and grazing. At the height of the dry season they are forced to drink at the same pools, lagoons, and river inlets as men, and the dry bare country allows open chase, for except in tracking giraffe, Nuer hunt by sight and not by spoor. It is only gazelles, which are worried by dogs, and buffaloes, which prefer attack to flight, that can be tackled by one or two men. Other animals, such as tiang, cob, and buck, are only killed when they approach a camp and can be cut off by a large number of young men. I saw several animals killed on the Sobat by being surrounded on the landward side and driven into

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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water or rank vegetation, and as they can graze on the tender shoots. But when the dry season advances pasture becomes scarcer but cattle can graze again over the shoots. Eventually, however, they have to fall back on marsh grasses, especially in a dry year when such grasses of the plains as *dut cieng nath* may fail (it is said *ce lōr* or *ce juac lōr*). Nuer then make for rivers, swamps, lagoons, and deep marshy depressions where they can always find enough vegetation to keep the cattle alive. The chief marsh grasses are *poon* (*Onyza Barthi A. cheval*), *giĕk*, *buogh*, and *kuth yang*. Nuer say that no grasses give more milk than these if the cows can obtain them in abundance.

Cattle also eat a number of plants and these are a useful addition to their diet. A good number of such plants, however, grow in cultivations and are therefore not accessible to the cattle, but some spring up in old garden sites and in the neighbourhood of habitations. Nevertheless cattle are grass grazers and it is mainly sheep and goats which graze on plants, and they eat also the leaves of young trees. Goats will eat almost anything but sheep are daintier feeders and will not touch some of the bitter plants and shrubs that goats devour. The plants eaten by sheep or goats, or by both, generally grow in old cultivations or on old homestead and camp sites. Some of those recorded are *Cak*, 'milk,' so-called because it oozes out a thick white juice when cut, *tiltil* (*Boerhaaira repens L.*) another plant called *tiltil* (*Indigofera Sp.*), *Wangrial* (*Justicia malammensis* (*Schwenf*) *oliv.*), *năr yiauwa* (*Emilia sagittata DC*), *mut ngai*, 'spear of the francolin' (*schleria foliosa A. Rich.*), *wōōr* (*Portulaca Quadrifida L.*), *kulkakdeel* (*Glycine Borianii Bak*), *tac* (*Ipomoea replans Poir*), *pac* (*Urochloa s:.*), *nyiōk indit pin*, *tiecdong* (*cyperus rotundus L.*), *tiec*, *belagak gordel*, *kăr jaakoah* ('crow's pumpkins'), *thil in cōt*, etc., etc.

XI.

Besides having to adapt themselves to conditions of water supply and vegetation Nuer have to adjust themselves to conditions of insect-life which is an ever-present obstacle to cattle husbandry in their country. The cattle get no rest from stinging flies and ticks from

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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morn till nightfall and in the rainy season they are menaced by mosquitos as soon as the sun sets.

When the rains commence the cattle are taken back to the permanent villages and, as mosquitos become numerous, they are milked towards sunset and then at once tethered in the byres, the doors being closed after them. In the centre of each byre a huge fire of dried dung sends out clouds of smoke so dense that it is impossible for a European to remain there for several minutes. One cannot even see the cattle. One can only hear their movements as they chew the cud (*nyŏk*) and change their position. The smoke and heat are so oppressive that I have often wondered how either Nuer or their cattle survive the atmosphere night after night. Young men sleep on a platform above the fire and if the smoke becomes less dense one of them descends to stir up the fire and pile on more dung, for as soon as the smoke beings to clear—it escapes through the thatched roof—mosquitos enter. When the cattle are brought into the kraal before sunrise they are sleepy. I suppose that they have not had a very restful night in the stifling atmosphere of the byres. Nuer realize that the heat and smoke of the byres are bad for the cattle but they consider that mosquitos are worse. At the end of the rainy season and at the commencement of the dry season they leave the cattle outside till they go to bed themselves. Then they have to shut them in the byres because they would inevitably be devoured by lions if left all night unguarded in the kraals. They do not make up the fires so high at this time of the year for after the first millet harvest has been reaped mosquitos are far less numerous near the villages, since there is now no standing water and the grasses have been close-cropped on the ridges by the flocks and herds. Later those who still remain in the villages often erect windscreens in the kraals and spend the night with the cattle outside.

The worst months for mosquitos are July, August and September, when there is surface water and when the millet crop is well grown, for swarms of mosquitos shelter beneath the broad leaves of the millet during the heat of the day. As soon as the sun sets one hears Nuer slapping mosquitoes on their bodies as they sit by the kraal

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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fires, but they are quickly driven into huts and byres to seek protection amid the smoke of their fires. The doors of the huts are closed tightly, air-holes are blocked, and fires are lit. Mosquito-nets are the only European product, apart from spears, for which the Nuer express any great enthusiasm, but very few, perhaps one in several thousand, possess them.

During my residence at Mancöm on the Sobat in July, 1935 I was almost eaten alive by mosquitos. My cotton mosquito house afforded me some protection at night but insects soon made holes in it and the mosquitos entered. Moreover, they swarmed outside like a beleaguering army and on my leaving or entering the house battalions invaded it. The worst time was between six and nine o'clock in the morning when hundreds of mosquitos collected in my tent to escape the sun so that it was impossible to sit in it without being repeatedly bitten. One gets little rest, and fever is sooner or later inevitable.

Mosquitos are absent away from pools and river banks in the dry season and even in the vicinity of water—and one must live near water—they are not troublesome from January to May. In the dry season, therefore, the cattle sleep in the open, the herd being surrounded by windscreens in which the Nuer themselves sleep. If a beast of prey approaches people know of its approach by observing that the cattle are restless. The alarm is given and in a moment the whole camp is awake and men rush, with spears in their hands, to the place of danger. I have seen camps awake half the night chasing lions away, for a lion makes many attempts before he acknowledges defeat. But even in the dry season dung fires envelope the camps in smoke at night to protect the cattle from insects.

According to the Nuer it was Woman who first brought mosquitos to the habitations of men. Woman found Mosquito in the open plain and asked him " What do you eat ? " Mosquito replied, " Oh ! grass. Just nothing." Woman said to him, " Well come home with me and we will share our homestead together " When God heard Woman's words he asked her, " What about your husband ? " Woman replied,

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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"Oh! He can brush away Mosquito with a bird's wing." God said, "All right." For the first few days Man brushed mosquitos aside. Then he found that it was useless so he suffered them.

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Another unpleasant insect pest is the seroot fly (*rŏw*). Seroot are seasonal. They flourish on cloudy days from May to July. I have not seen them in this latitude from the end of July to the beginning of May. When I was at Konye in May and at Yakwac in July they appeared in swarms every morning shortly before the cattle were driven to pasture, between 9 and 9.30 a.m. At the same hour every morning I was driven from my tent by their painful stings. Fortunately when the cattle go to pasture the seroot flies accompany them. On most mornings at Konye about two hours after being driven to pasture the herd came stampeding back kicking their legs and lashing out with their tails and dung fires had to be lit in the kraal to protect them. There was no need to tether the cattle for they were only too grateful to be allowed to stand near the fires and let the smoke envelope them. Only when there was a shower of rain did they get any relief in the pastures, for rain drives seroot away. On cloudy rainless days the poor beasts ran back to the village covered with seroot and their flanks stained with blood. On such days they were not able to graze for more than two or three hours.

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By August the seroot has gone but the stumoxis (*wuik*) remains. It is a small black biting fly which is present in the rains and, I think, in the dry season also. It is probably responsible for the presence of trypanosomiasis in parts of Nuerland, transferring the trypanosomes directly on its proboscis from beast to beast, for the tsetse (*mi* or *luk lier*) does not occur in Nuerland, except perhaps in parts of Eastern Gaajak country, which I have not visited, though its lethal character is well known to Nuer. Indeed they have probably had to take it into account in their expansion eastwards for there can be little doubt that the main reason for their evacuation of Anuakland, which they conquered as far as the foothills of the Abyssinian escarpment was the loss of their cattle from trypanosomiasis carried by tsetse, which occupy a belt of country at the foot of the escarpment wherever dense forest occurs.

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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There are other insect pests beside mosquitos, seroot and stumoxis, which annoy the cattle though whether any of them carry disease in this latitude is unknown. The eight-legged cattle ticks (*cak*) attach themselves so firmly to the dewlap, brisket, chest, belly, and udder that their blood-bloated bodies have to be sharply tugged if they are to be dislodged. Nuer remove them frequently in the evenings but not often enough and not systematically enough. There is another insect called *tharkwar* which is said to live on the bodies of cattle though its bite does not cause bleeding.

Personally, of all the insects that abound in African luxuriance in Nuerland I hate most the ordinary black fly, which is like our house fly in appearance. Nuer do not pay much regard to it and they are doubtless less objectionable to the cattle than most insects, though they worry them a good deal in hot weather. These flies settle on one and drive one crazy from dawn till sunset. On trek one is accompanied by an attendant swarm round one's head and shoulders. They do not seem to mind travelling any distance. When one is seated they settle persistently on the exposed parts of one's body. When one is eating they get in the food. All day long one is brushing them away. Their most annoying habit is experienced at sunset when they seek some cavity in one's body in which to spend the night, selecting the ears, nostrils, and eyes for this purpose. They are worst in the middle of the dry season for wet and cold keep them away—probably kill them off—to some extent in the rains and in the windy season that succeeds the rains. In the dry season they are sometimes intolerable. When I was encamped at Mankac and Biel on the Nyanding River there was very little water, and that fouled, in the pools, and the cattle were dying daily of rinderpest. A man might have thought that every fly in the world had come to live around the pools and to feed on carcases and excreta. In my more bitter moments I used to think of Nuerland as a land where the first mosquitos begin to bite one's legs as the last flies crawl into one's ears and nostrils.

While I am recalling my own experiences of insects I will mention in conclusion the red soldier ants (*mörmör*). I have only seen these

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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•136 ants in the wooded area near the junction of the Sobat and the Nyanding Rivers and they may be regarded as uncommon in Nuerland, since they are probably found only where there is fairly thick forest. They sometimes get into the byres and the cattle have to be taken outside while efforts are made to drive them away with ashes. When they invaded my camp our efforts were unavailing. We fought them for five days with fire and ashes and water and, though it was the worst time of the year for mosquitos, I was compelled to sleep the last three nights in a deck-chair surrounded by a ring of fire. On the sixth day we gave up the struggle and broke camp.

114 I have ventured to give some of my own experiences because one of the great difficulties of working as an anthropologist, or indeed in any other capacity, in Nuerland, is the constant irritation caused by insects and the exhaustion and sickness that finally ensue. To 233 appreciate what the Nuer have to endure it is well to endure for a while the same torments. While their cattle have to live in such conditions the breed cannot well be improved and the milk yield increased, for they never get any real rest and the continual irritation caused them by insects must greatly lower their vitality and render them an easy prey to disease. In the circumstances their hardiness and endurance is remarkable.

XII.

232 Having had no veterinary training I cannot list all the diseases from which cattle suffer in Nuerland. The most serious scourge is certainly rinderpest (*nyapec, nyapec Deang, nyanjat munnyuac*).

The usual name in most parts of Nuerland is *nyapec*. It is given a female name because of the supposed female properties of serious epidemics. Similarly, severe cases of smallpox are spoken of as female and light cases as male. A Nuer, with whom Miss Soule was once discussing rinderpest, when asked by her why it had a feminine prefix replied, " Would any man do such a thing as to kill all the cattle ? " The wild dog is called *jiok nyapec* and I have been told that it is so called because wild dogs brought rinderpest to the cattle (*cuo nyapec nɔɔng dɔ̈ɔ̈r e ken*).

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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vary much from month to month for there are few seasonal changes at this time of the year. As the river falls it is possible to fish in lagoons and shallows and to bathe on its sandy bed. Then the lagoons dry up. When the river rises fish swim in the weeds and rushes and along some streams they are easily speared from the banks. The banks of the Sobat are too steep for this purpose. There are no longer shallows and bathing is a hasty dip for there is danger from crocodiles. The grazing grounds are changed from time to time as they become exhausted and as streams and lagoons dry up. At Yakwac there was succulent pasturage only where marsh plants still retained their moisture at the river end of lagoons. The people are still in camp when the first rains fall at the end of April or early in May and then there is everywhere an abundance of pasturage. The brown bush becomes green and the baked fissured earth a sodden mire. Dry lagoons become inland flowing streams. The scorching sun is clouded.

On the Sobat we guessed that the first rains had fallen inland by the migration of wild animals from its banks. Giraffe now left us for inland pastures where they would not have to face death every time they approached the river. Other animals likewise moved southwards, even the gazelle. On the northern bank, however, buffaloes still came to the river to drink and were attacked by hungry Nuer. Animals and men must obey the seasons and when there is no water except in inland lakes and lagoons, men, cattle, and wild beasts must drink at the same places. One can hear them at night cautiously coming to the pools to drink. When the rains come all leave for new pastures.

In May one knows that the move back to the wet season villages will shortly take place not only by cloudy skies and movements of game, but also by camp activities. The women are the first to leave camp and one meets them along paths, carrying their household goods in rectangular cane baskets. Youths leave camp early in the morning to cut stakes, generally of thornwood (buon) and they spend a large part of the day shaping them into tethering pegs. They also twist new cord. The weather being cooler people do not feel so keenly the need to sleep towards noon. Everyone is becoming restless and

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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throughout that period. This area is known as the *toic*,[1] and is of value for reasons other than pasture, for the pools and lagoons are full of fish which provide an important item of diet at that time of the year. These conditions determine the seasonal migrations of the Nuer in search of pasture for their cattle, cultivation, and other activities which are part of their economy.

Physical conditions varying from thick bush country, sandy ridges, open grasslands stretching mile after mile with scarcely a tree to break the horizon, to marshland and papyrus swamp, are found in all parts of Nuerland. In the Zeraf Valley, a few miles west of that river, there is a long and almost continuous ridge where the Lak, Thiang, and a few of the Gaawar have their permanent villages. The banks of the Zeraf are high and well defined in its lower reaches, and in some places villages are built close to the river's edge, but to the west the country falls away into swampier ground until it reaches the papyrus swamps of the Bahr el Jebel. A large proportion of Lak country and part of Thiang is covered with acacia bush, land which provides only poor grazing and an abundance of biting flies such as the striped *tabanids* which are the agent through which direct infection of trypanosomiasis is conveyed. For this reason Lak country is considered poor for cattle. The area on the east bank of the Zeraf is occupied by the majority of the Gaawar and is much less densely populated. High ground is more limited and dispersed, and the people have to contend with serious floods in their permanent settlements, but such conditions produce more plentiful grazing. In the east is the Duk Ridge, a series of sandy outcrops running parallel to the river about forty miles inland. This area was densely populated in Dinka times and in the early stages of the Nuer invasion, and it remains a refuge for the Gaawar in times of heavy flood. In the exceptional floods of 1917–18, which the Nuer refer to as *pilual*, the Duk ridge was packed with refugees fleeing from the rising waters.

The country occupied by the Lou Nuer has all the characteristics of Gaawar country, though the better drained land on which they build their villages is more concentrated, and there is no perennial river running through it. A few of the Lou move to the Sobat River during the dry season and many to the country bordering the Pibor River, but the rest remain along the *toics* left on the edges of the khor Fullus and its tributaries. Those who move eastwards have been something of a problem to the Administration in recent years, for there is a tendency to settle permanently in Anuak country and sometimes over the border in Abyssinia. The cause of this movement is presumably increasing population in man and cattle and the desire

[1] This word has no more precise meaning than 'marshland' in English, and is often used very loosely to describe any area which provides pasture during the dry months of the year.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Chapter Two

RESOURCES OF THE NUER

WILD ANIMALS AND CATTLE

WILD animals abound in Nuerland. Lions, leopards, giraffes, buffaloes, elephants, hippos, monkeys are found as well as other species, and also crocodiles, snakes, and scorpions. 136 •

Sometimes animals are killed with spears (Fig. 4), sometimes traps are made to catch them. Holes are dug into which they fall and are unable to get out. Men sometimes chase them and drive them toward the trap which they have made. Giraffes may be killed in this way as they cannot run fast, especially if the ground be muddy. Monkeys are safe in Nuerland as a Nuer will not willingly kill them. If a monkey is killed, it will surely rain hard, but if it is killed in the dry season, the weather will only become cloudy. 224 [325]

Probably the largest snake found here is the python. Many of the snakes are deadly poisonous. One is a spitting snake. Another is said to bite and also sting its victim with its tail at the same time, much as a scorpion stings. Another snake, the 'thatut', is said to leave a tooth in the person it bites. The Nuer believe that if a person is once bitten by a 'thatut' no other snake will deign to bite him. 136 [325]

The number of cattle owned by individuals varies in different parts of Nuerland. Those who live along the Nile have many cattle. Those in the Garjak country have more cattle than those near Nasser. In the regions where cattle are more plentiful the number of cattle asked as a marriage price is greater. 231

Cattle with the wide-spreading long horns are the most desirable. A Nuer is afraid that a cow without horns may 231 776

757 It is surprising how quickly the ulcers respond to treatment at first. Later, when they are partly healed, the process seems to be slower, an ulcer may persist in being almost but not quite well for some time. Scar tissue breaks down easily, and the bare Nuer limb gets many a scratch and bruise which tend to cause a recurrence of the sore.

[302] When a man is downcast because a sore is slow in healing, he may bind his hair closely to the head by sewing it with cotton thread until it has the effect of a hair-net. He may wear his hair like this until his cause of distress of mind and sorrow of heart is relieved. This in itself explains to those who see him that there is a reason why he is not adorning his body, and that he is not careless about his personal appearance without cause.

One attack of yaws does not render a man immune. Of course, those who have had no complete cure of the first attack are specially subject to a recurrence of this disease.

164 Leprosy is rare among the Nuer although neighbouring tribes are subject to it.

Trachoma probably causes more trouble in Nuerland than any other disease with the exception of yaws. It is so widespread, and is the cause of much partial and total loss of sight. Many have trichiasis, but when, as in the past, there was a doctor at Nasser many were relieved of this affliction by operation. At the Government hospital at Malakal, both in the past and in the present, relief was, and is, offered to all who come.

● [136] Flies are so numerous in this land that they have a very active part in the spread of disease.

Amoebic dysentery also takes its toll of life and weakens the people, although it is not as prevalent as some other diseases.

755 They chant, they spit and blow upon the person. A sheep or an ox may be sacrificed. If the disease is persistent, more sacrifices are offered, more chanting is done. If successful in removing the cause of the disease, or even if the people are satisfied with what he has done, the medicine man usually receives a gift of a sheep or an ox for his services. But if the patient dies while under treatment the price paid is usually returned. The medicine men, or women, as the case may be, or those who are supposed to have a god in them, reap a good harvest in sheep and cattle from those who seek their services for relief from disease.

Medicine men usually wear the hair long and may wear a beard.

757 One common practice that is often resorted to for curative effect is bleeding. In case of a swelling or a bruise or muscular pain, many small cuts are made at the site of the pain in order to let the blood out and presumably the pain with it.

In cases of severe colds the chest is often cut in this way. When patients so treated go to the clinic for medical aid, it is often impossible to rub the chest with oils or apply poultices on account of the effect of such medicines on these little raw cuts.

[736] 164 Scorpions and snakes abound in Nuerland, and cause a great deal of suffering, but few die of snakebite.

The Nuer do not have much malaria. Occasionally one may see a few cases among them.

DEATH AND BURIAL

888 764 The Nuer are kind to their aged and usually respect their opinions, but death in Nuerland and the details of burial are gruesome. The climate of course necessitates quick burial, so as soon as life is extinct preparations must be made.